



## Canada extends emergency powers to deal with truck protests

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WASHINGTON (TND) — The Canadian Parliament has voted to extend Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s emergency powers to stop the protests against vaccine mandates in Ottawa.

Those powers are leading to questions about civil liberties and those questions are now being asked in Washington as well. How far a nation’s leader should go to protect citizens is being put to the test in Canada.

“You can’t hold a city hostage,” Trudeau said.

Now, with the support of Parliament, the prime minister is standing by emergency orders to do things like freeze bank accounts of truckers that Trudeau says were getting foreign funding and tow away vehicles.

“We are taking the government of Canada to court,” said Noa Mendelsohn Aviv with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

The CCLA argues that the measures weren’t justified and violated the rights of Canadians, which is causing concern among some in Washington.

“The idea that this could happen, I think, is very, very worrisome,” Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., said.

For years, Paul has warned about presidential overreach and compares the situation in Canada to his own broader efforts to limit executive powers, especially during emergencies.

Presidents have more than 100 emergency laws available to them, including deploying troops to states to quell unrest or shutting down wire communications, which many legal experts believe includes the internet.

“Whether it’s surveillance on the one hand or whether it’s the power to freeze assets on the other hand, government does tend to push,” said Walter Olson, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute.

Calls to limit presidential emergency powers have come from both parties during both Republican and Democratic presidencies such as the Democrats' "Protecting Our Democracy Act," aimed at preventing abuse of power.

"And hold anyone privileged enough to hold that office accountable for their actions," said Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I.

With the many challenges presented over the past few years — the pandemic, an attack on the Capitol, potential war — many are reconsidering how much power one leader should have.